1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

been my chief guides to Toda lore. One man who had pointed out to me certain sacred places fell ill and made up his mind that he was going to die. Another man lost his wife a few days after he had shown me the method of performing one of the most sacred of Toda ceremonies. A third man who had revealed to me the details of the ceremonial of the most sacred Toda dairy, suffered the loss of his own village dairy by fire.

The Todas consulted their diviners, who ascribed these events to the anger of the gods because their secrets had been revealed to the stranger. In consequence my sources of information ran dry to a large extent, and the difficulties in the way of the investigation of the more sacred topics were greatly increased. By the time it was settled that I was to blame I was nearly at the end of my visit, but it was in the last two or three weeks that I had hoped to overcome the scruples of the people and to obtain information on many doubtful points about which I had to come away unsatisfied.

One of the subjects on which my material is defective is the folk-lore. I have a number of tales, but they are only a small part of the store of Toda legend. I regret especially the incompleteness of my work in this respect because I believe that the Todas are rapidly forgetting their folk-tales and the legends of their gods, while their ceremonial remains to a large extent intact, and seems likely to continue so for some time.

I was especially struck by this because, in previous anthropological experience in the islands of Torres Straits with Dr. Haddon, we had found the exact opposite to be the case. In these islands, the ceremonial had disappeared, and the only record of it to be obtained was that derived from the memories of the oldest inhabitants. Nevertheless in Torres Straits the store of legend was still ample, and the agreement of the stories obtained from different individuals was so great that it was evident that the people had preserved their folk-lore with fidelity.

The difference between the two communities is easily explained. In Torres Straits missionary influence is strong, and missionary effort is always directed to break down the practices

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

000 associated with belief. The ceremonial in Torres Straits had been swept away, while the stories of the legendary heroes were almost all that remained to the people of the old life and were in consequence still cherished.

177 Among the Todas missionary influence, whether of Christian or Hindu, has had little effect, and the ritual of the Todas in some parts of the hills is almost, if not quite, untouched by outside influences.[1] The effect of intercourse with other peoples seems to be showing itself largely in the form of loss of interest in the stories of the past.

171 One of the most striking aspects of the customs and ceremonies of the Todas is that these have in many cases no exact parallels in other places. Perhaps the most definite result which modern research in anthropology has brought out is the extraordinary similarity of custom throughout the world. Customs apparently identical are found in races so widely separated geographically and so diverse ethnologically that it seems certain the customs must have developed in total independence of one another. There seems to be an identity of idea actuating custom in peoples very different from one another in their surroundings and conditions of life.

The nearest parallels to Toda custom and ceremonial are undoubtedly to be found in the Indian peninsula, but even here, though there is often a general resemblance, this breaks down on going into detail. Even when the resemblance is so close as to suggest a common origin, the differences in detail are often very great.[2]

177 One clue to this exceptional nature of Toda custom and belief is to be found in the geographical position of the people, which has to a large extent isolated them from the world in general.

133 The plateau on which they live, broken by numerous hills and valleys, is the top of a scarp formed by the meeting of the Eastern and Western Ghats. Some of the hills project

[1] As we shall see later, this is only true of some parts of the hills and some institutions.

[2] With more exact knowledge of Indian customs and ceremonies which have lingered on side by side with, though often obscured by Brahmanism, it is possible that these differences would be found to be much slighter than the evidence at present available suggests.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

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Puzkârṇûdr adetpoḷoṭki? Kûdi kûgiti.
Calls out if why that says no? Cock crows.

What is it that calls out and no one replies? The cock.

Neiu tiri kai, pon tiri pûv? Eln.
Earth goes round fruit, sky goes round flower? The tip-cat game.

Mudâl pîr vatvai, pin marsvati; pin pîr
First pregnant who becomes, later is delivered; later pregnant

vatvai, mudâl marsvati? Tâmi, kodj.
who becomes, first is delivered? A grain, barley.

Tami or *samai* (*patm*) is the grain from which *patcherski*, one of the chief Toda foods, is made. It shows above the ground later than barley, but is reaped earlier.

524 I did not hear of any mechanical puzzles or tricks used by the Todas, and it was quite clear that they had no knowledge of cat's-cradle.

POETRY AND MUSIC

533 538 I have given two samples of Toda poetry in the chapter on funeral ceremonies. These are the chief occasions on which songs are composed, but they are also made when a new dairy is being built, and may be composed and sung on any festive occasion. The general name for compositions of this kind is *kunedsti*, and certain men have special reputations as composers. The most noted of recent times was a man named Mervoin belonging to the family of Kiugi.

Of those now living, Teitnir, whose two funeral songs I have given, is a noted composer, and I was told of six other men who were especially gifted in this way.

Though I have called these compositions songs, they should, perhaps, rather be called recitations. They are [195] certainly not songs with any musical accompaniment. I understood, though I am not clear about this, that the clauses, or *kwarzam*, of the funeral poems are said in a low voice "in the throat," so that they are not understood by the people who hear them. If this is correct, the funeral *kwarzam* resemble in this respect those of which the prayers consist.

538 The Toda poets also compose songs on any festive

I: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

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occasion, and Mr. Thurston[1] has recorded examples of several such compositions.

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Dancing takes place at the funeral ceremonies, and exhibitions of these or other dances are sometimes given by the Todas. The only dancing I saw was at a funeral and it was of the simplest possible description, the men who took part forming a circle and moving slowly round and round.

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The only musical instrument of the Todas is a simple flute, called the *buguri*. It is shown in Fig. 68, where it is being played by the man on the right. The instrument is not much used by the Todas and is not, so far as I know played on any ceremonial occasion. The music at the funeral ceremonies is always performed by Kotas.

[1] *Bull.* iv. p. 7.

3: Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

175 " oldest buffalo cows, hang a miserable little bell on their necks, this is enough to ensure " the buffaloes adoration. The buffaloes are permitted to go about free everywhere, also " into the fields to graze, and everyone considers himself fortunate if they eat something " of his property. Though the buffaloes are very often killed by tigers, the Todas do " not slacken in their worship."

The Carmelite made his journey in 1657, and only heard these reports on the Coast.

173 The Todas themselves have a few stories, which, however, it is very difficult to extract
173 from them. The elder men, who are the chief depositaries of the mythological learning of the tribe, are, native-like, very averse to questions (which always seem to bring before them visions of taxation), and apt to profess entire ignorance. Such traditions as I have obtained, are of no historical importance, but may have some ethnological value, in common with the legends of most rude tribes. I give them, therefore, much in the form in which I received them.

124 A Pekkan man, Kiniaven, one of my intimate acquaintances, when asked whether his
533 people had any songs like the Badagas, said yes, they had songs, and after entreaties for a specimen, began a queer monotonous sort of drone through his nose. He said there
538 were no words to the song, but when pressed as to the meaning, and what they thought about when singing, he replied they thought about the names of their gods, which he
173 enumerated. After racking his brains a little more, he discovered that they also thought
173 about Dirkish the son of Ēn. What about Dirkish? Of what Dirkish said in lamenting his father Ēn. What did Dirkish say? "Where have you gone, why have you left us,
176 " have you gone to Heaven, what shall I do," &c., &c. Did they sing anything else about Dirkish? Yes, they sang that Dirkish made everything, the kraals, the buffaloes, the Todas, the *pâltchis*, &c., &c., with childishly minute enumeration. Whether these lugubrious "songs without words" really are supposed to convey an idea of Dirkish's labours or lamentations, I cannot say; but the most discriminating ear could not discover any appropriate variations in tune. By further inquiries, I discovered that Ēn was "the first Toda who came" (he had previously said that they were created on the hills), he went to heaven by way of the Avalanche, and was no more seen; that his son was Dirkish, who built the munds and temples *and the Cairns on Seven Cairn hill,* and Nātanēri hill,*† no others; that all the other cairns were built before the Todas came up; that Dirkish also divided the Todas into five tribes; that he did not die, nor go to heaven, but resided as a god on Seven Cairn hill. On being asked who told them all this, they said Kotēn told them, Kotēn was one of their ancestors, and brought up the Kotas. On another occasion they said the Kotas were also born on the hills, and explained the discrepancy, by saying that Kotēn had first bargained with the Kotas saying "You shall be my people, and make pots for us." Possibly the claim of the Kotas to dead buffaloes, mentioned before, formed part of this agreement.

124 Up to this point I had to extract Kiniaven's information piecemeal, but afterwards,
539 finding, I suppose, that no fatal consequences followed his indiscretion, he became communicative, and volunteered the following stories, which he related with, for a Toda,
173 great fluency.

I subsequently verified the stories in all essential points, by inquiries from other Todas.

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* Close to Mūttinād mand, near the top of the Segūr Ghāt. † To the right of the Coorumand road.

10: Emeneau L-5 (1935-1937) 1938
AW60 Toda AW60

Rivers says (p. 452): "The present state of the Toda religion seems to be one in which ritual has persisted while the beliefs at the bottom of the ritual have largely disappeared." By "beliefs" he referred to the stories of those gods, such as tö:kiȷ and the rest, whom we have shown above to be the töuθuṭ. Since they are distinct from the töuno:ṛ, it is clear that the ritual of the dairy-complex has no connexion with the beliefs about the töuθuṭ. It is true that the dairy-complexes are of much greater interest to the Toda than the other gods, but these latter have quite as much power to cause misfortune as the former, opportunities only arising less frequently. We may probably see in the highly developed ritual of the dairies a product of long accretion, starting originally no doubt from the fairly general Indian belief in the sanctity of cattle. The steps by which this grew into the present cult cannot be discovered. But if this is the origin of the Toda ritualized dairy-practice, we need not expect anything more in the way of beliefs than we actually find, viz. anecdotes to explain anomalies of various dairy-complexes. Long origin stories are lacking, everything being referred either to these anecdotes for a few abnormal details or to creation in general terms by tö:kiȷ and the other töuθuṭ for the general scheme of things. It is possible that tö:kiȷ and the gods associated with her represent an older layer of belief than the dairy-complex gods, but no evidence is forthcoming other than the chronology given in the Toda myths. About the former gods, the töuθuṭ, stories are still told in the vague way of which Rivers complained (p. 452 middle). But this vagueness is really merely a sketchiness of detail that I have found in all Toda story-telling, arising from a lack of interest in the story-telling technique, not from a lack of interest in the stories (see my paper *An Echo-word Motif in Dravidian Folk-tales*). There is no reason to suppose that the stories of the old gods will ever be forgotten while the tribe survives.

Into the close-knit nexus of the Toda dairy-complex no change is likely to come except in matters of detail, and no such change since Rivers' time is known to me. Short of complete abandonment of the system it is hard to conceive of any radical alteration. But, as was already noted by Rivers (pp. 457-8 worship of Hindu deities can go on "side by side with the proper religion of the Todas."